

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today said President Bush's proposal to cut funding for research veterans' medical needs at a time of war is "stunning and irresponsible" and "does not represent the values of the American people."

The President's budget, which was released on Monday, aims to slash the Medical and Prosthetic Research budget to \$442 million – an 8 percent cut – for FY 2009. The President also proposed to reduce veterans' rehabilitation research by more than 7 percent.

"I simply can't believe the President wants to deny our war-wounded veterans the option of having cutting-edge prosthetics," said Mitchell. "It is stunning and irresponsible. What I'm hearing from people in my district is that we need to make sure our veterans get the care they have earned and deserve. Our wounded warriors have unique injuries and require unique prosthetics. It is our responsibility to make sure they have the tools they need to lead healthy and productive lives."

Mitchell, who serves as the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, continues to examine the importance investing in prosthetics research for our nation's veterans. His committee will examine the importance of prosthetics and post in-patient care through a hearing on Feb. 27.

Last May, Mitchell voted for legislation to boost the investment in veterans' prosthetics research. The bill passed the House with a strong bipartisan vote of 348 to 73. [Roll Call No. 424, May 24, 2007]

The independent Congressional Budget Office testified on October 2007, that 791 Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans have undergone amputations through January 2007. [Source: CBO Testimony, Oct. 17, 2007]

The Department of Veteran's Affairs Medical and Prosthetic Research program "develops novel approaches to restoring veterans with traumatic amputation, central nervous system injuries, loss of sight and/or hearing, or other physical and cognitive impairments to full and productive lives." [Source: President's Proposed VA Budget, Feb. 4, 2008]